This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated July 30, 2003 (Paper No. 1). Claims 1 to 51 are in the application, of which Claims 1, 10, 18, 27, 35 and 44, the independent claims, have been amended. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

In the Office Action Claims 1 to 51 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,181,440 (Masuda) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,793,952 (Limsico). Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

The present invention generally concerns the retrieval of document data, in which the document data is stored, a request for retrieval of document data is received from a user, with the request including a password, and the stored document data is retrieved. Additionally, the document data is output, a new password is automatically issued in response to receiving from a user a request for retrieval of the document data, and the user is notified of the new password.

Thus, among its many features, the invention issues a new password automatically, and issues the new password automatically in response to receiving from a user a request for retrieval of document data.

Referring specifically to the claims, independent Claim 1 defines an apparatus for conducting a retrieval of document data, comprising storing means for storing the document data, a receiver, for receiving from a user a request for retrieval of the document data, with the request including a password, a transmitter, for transmitting the password, received by the receiver, to a managing unit on a network, and deciding means

for, when the managing unit confirms the password transmitted by said transmitter, receiving a confirmation result from the managing unit to decide, on the basis of the confirmation result, whether or not the user is an authorized user. The apparatus also comprises retrieving means for retrieving the document data stored in the storing means according to a decision result obtained by the deciding means, outputting means for outputting document data retrieved by the retrieving means, issuing means for automatically issuing a new password in response to receiving from a user a request for retrieval of the document data by the receiver, and registering means for transmitting the new password, issued by the issuing means, to the managing unit to register the new password as a valid password.

Independent Claim 10 defines an apparatus for conducting a retrieval of document data, comprising storing means for storing the document data, a receiver, for receiving a request for a retrieval of the document data, including a password, from a user, confirming means for confirming authorization of the user through the use of the password which the receiver receives, retrieving means for retrieving the document data stored in the storing means on the basis of a confirmation result by the confirming means, and outputting means for outputting document data retrieved by the retrieving means. The apparatus also comprises issuing means for issuing a new password automatically in response to a receiving operation of the receiving means, and notifying means for notifying the user of the new password issued by the issuing means in a mode corresponding to a mode taken for when the receiver receives the retrieval request.

The applied art is not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of the present invention. More particularly, the applied art is not seen to provide for issuing a

new password automatically, and issuing the new password automatically in response to receiving from a user a request for retrieval of document data.

Masuda discloses a facsimile apparatus, which includes a printer, a memory, a reception unit, and a setting unit. See Masuda, Abstract; col. 2, ll. 63 to col. 3, ll. 4; and Figure 1. As acknowledged in the Office Action, however, Masuda does not disclose issuing a new password after document data has been retrieved.

Limsico is not seen to remedy the deficiencies of Masuda. Specifically, Limsico discloses a secure graphical user interface, in which a password changer provides the capability to securely change a user's password at a remote location. See Limsico, Abstract; col. 2, ll 51 to 56. In Limsico, however, in order to invoke the password changer program, the user must request to change or update a password. Applicant asserts that a user-initiated password change request is different from the feature of the present invention, in which a new password is issued automatically, and the new password is issued automatically in response to receiving from a user a request for retrieval of document data.

As such, even if Masuda and Limsico are combined in the manner proposed in the Office Action (assuming for argument's sake that such combination would be permissible), the result would not teach or suggest at least the feature of issuing a new password automatically, and issuing the new password automatically in response to receiving from a user a request for retrieval of document data.
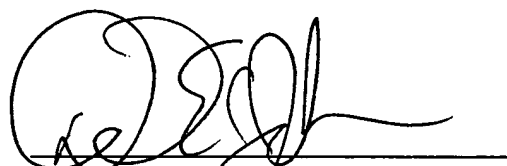
Accordingly, based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, independent Claims 1, 10, 18, 27, 35 and 44 are believed to be allowable over the applied references. The other claims in the application are each dependent from the independent claims and are

believed to be allowable over the applied references for at least the same reasons. Because each dependent claim is deemed to define additional aspects of the invention, however, the individual consideration of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance. And such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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